

Professor Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday
Doctor of Literature *honoris causa*

Citation

This is a happy occasion for us today as it marks not only the honouring of a most distinguished linguist of world renown, Professor M A K Halliday, but also his return to the newly established Lingnan University in Hong Kong. In the late 1940s, the young Michael Halliday, a student of Chinese and Chinese linguistics, studied at the two most prominent universities in China: first at Peking University, Beijing and then - most significantly for us - at Lingnan University, Guangzhou. His return here on this occasion completes one circle of his association with Lingnan and opens a new chapter in our relationship.

It is fitting that in this year when Lingnan regains university title and embarks on a new Liberal Arts journey, it should welcome back one of the most gifted and celebrated scholars to have studied at Lingnan and who carries within himself, I know, pride in this association. It is also appropriate that in a new Lingnan that is committed to a bilingual language policy, we should honour a man who began his scholarly career as a student of Chinese and who is now most recognised as a pioneer in (principally, though far from exclusively) English linguistics. I may flatter him to say that he remains bilingual, though I know that his modesty will prevent him from acknowledging current perfection in Chinese.

His PhD thesis at the University of Cambridge, gained in 1955, deals with a particular Chinese text *The Secret History of the Mongols*. His focus on the grammatical system of the Chinese text as a network of systemic probabilities foreshadows his later work in systemic-functional grammar and his description of grammar as the central processing unit of a language. It may be said (provocatively and with some trepidation) that his linguistics has been a fusion of East and West - what he learned from Chinese linguistics and linguists (most notably Professor Wang Li) underscored by the theoretical foundation of linguistics provided by his teacher in England, Professor J R Firth.

Most certainly, one feature that defines Professor Halliday's linguistics is his care to take a broad view beyond the monolingual perspective (usually English) and to avoid the ethnocentrism so common in many fields of study, including (oddly) linguistics, the scientific study of languages. For him, any assertion made about English grammar (for example) does not imply that the description will apply to any other language. This is not to deny that there is a meta-functional hypothesis by which the content systems of all languages are organised into ideational, interpersonal and textual components. Rather, it is to assert that within this broad hypothesis the descriptive categories of a language will be particular. The dangers of arguing for too rigid a system of universals in language are avoided as part of Professor Halliday's very pragmatic, ethnographic approach.

It is not the time or place to offer a detailed description of Professor Halliday's far-reaching and profound contribution to linguistics. But a few words must be said to indicate his particular precepts and - perhaps more significantly - the humane spirit and generous plurality - devoid of narrow factionalism - with which he has progressed his work and made his mark internationally.

Professor Halliday is most well-known and respected for the development of systemic-functional grammar. Indeed, his name is synonymous with what is now a far-reaching 'School' of linguistic thought. This approach is derived from Firth's system-structure theory, supplemented by the theories most commonly associated with the Prague school. In brief, this approach presents language as choice, a resource for making meaning by choosing. Professor Halliday's seminal contribution to the lexicogrammar of English is his book *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (1985) based on ideas that had been developed and extended over twenty years. A key element to this work is the need to view language within a context of culture, to use Malinowski's term, suggesting the key idea that linguistics must be socially accountable as languages are part of the cultural context and serve social purposes. Professor Halliday also pioneered the study of language as a social system, construing the socio-cultural context of a language as a semiotic system itself, representing a major alternative to

cognitive theories of language. His contribution in this area is marked by his study *Language as Social Semiotic* (1978) and his *Cohesion in English* (1976) co-authored by Ruqaiya Hasan.

Professor Halliday's contribution in these areas - and in others not mentioned here - is reflected in a very long list of published works (well in excess of 150) and a number of permanent and visiting academic posts in a variety of countries. Though born in Leeds, Yorkshire in 1925 and still fiercely proud of his native city, he has made his home in Australia since his appointment as the founding Professor of Linguistics at University of Sydney in 1976. Before that, he worked at Cambridge University as well as Edinburgh, Illinois and Essex. He has been honoured with honorary doctorates at numerous universities around the world.

Although he retired from Sydney in 1987, Professor Halliday has scarcely retired from linguistics. He remains much in demand from around the world and he shares his knowledge and generosity with students and colleagues unstintingly. His research work continues as energetically as ever. Only this year he has co-authored a major new book with Christian Matthiessen *Construing Experience through Meaning: A Language-based Approach to Cognition*. His energy and commitment are undiminished and he continues to contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the field of linguistics at the highest level.

Professor Halliday is well-regarded for his warmth, gregariousness and good humour. He is admired for his many acts of kindness and courtesy and his commitment to collegiality and truly cooperative endeavour. He has inspired successive waves of young linguists in many countries to study language with an open, honest mind, to take the broader, pluralistic, perspective and to eschew narrow factionalism and aberrant ethnocentrism. If there is such a thing as the Hallidayan way of doing linguistics (and I believe there is), it is to locate the study of language within the only context that any linguistic activity can be said (meaningfully) to have - the human (that is to say, social) context. If there is an ethic which emerges from Professor Halliday's work it is the ethic of personal responsibility and intellectual integrity in the pursuit of linguistic knowledge.

Mr Chairman, for his professional distinction in the field of linguistics, his resolute efforts in the cause of education for the people of many different countries, and for his personal qualities, I present Professor M A K Halliday for the award of Doctor of Literature *honoris causa*.

韓禮德教授 榮譽文學博士

贊辭

今天，我們除了頒授榮譽學位予蜚聲國際的語言學家韓禮德教授，更歡迎韓教授重返剛剛正名為大學的嶺南校園，名符其實是雙喜臨場。韓教授年輕時的專修中文及中國語言學，四十年代末就先後就讀於兩所名重中國的大學，一所是北京大學，另一所對我們來說意義，就是嶺南大的學。韓教授這次重返嶺南，不但圓了和嶺南的緣，他和嶺南的關係也揭開了新的一頁。

本校今年正名為大學，踏上開拓博雅教育的旅程，在這個迎新舊的時刻，高興地為嶺南大學的嶄新發展而自豪。同時，韓教授在嶺南的學習經歷，不僅是學術上的突破，更是語言學上的突破。韓教授在嶺南的學習經歷，不僅是學術上的突破，更是語言學上的突破。韓教授在嶺南的學習經歷，不僅是學術上的突破，更是語言學上的突破。

韓教授於劍橋大學攻讀博士課程，一九五五年獲頒學位，所撰論文專探《蒙古秘史》功能系統，韓教授（特別是王力教授）的研究心得，配合英國弗思教授給他的理論基礎，故能卓然成家。

韓教授研究語言學的一大特色，是超越單一語言（通常為英語）的局限，目光遠大，力戒民族自我的心態。這在許多學科中為其研究基礎。韓教授認為，英語或其他語言的假設，即所謂「大前提」，不應有獨立的敘述。韓教授在語言學上的貢獻，但不妨簡述其獨特的治學原則，而他與胞物與的精神、兼容並包的態度，也許尤其值得稱道。他的學問與成就，都是以此為基礎。

這裏不用細述韓教授在語言學上的貢獻，但不妨簡述其獨特的治學原則，而他與胞物與的精神、兼容並包的態度，也許尤其值得稱道。他的學問與成就，都是以此為基礎。

韓教授最受尊崇的成就，是提出系統的功能文法論。事實上的，他的名字今天代表了這一重要學派。而他對英語文法學的貢獻，是統一的，他的構理意圖，藉著《文法學》一書，將其研究的心意，最重地借馬林諾夫斯基的說法，他認為語言學不能脫離社會，而文化

一部分，並有社會作用。韓教授又率先倡議研究語言必須兼及社會制度，認為語言的文化範疇本身就是一套符號系統，突出了語言的重要，於語言認知學外別樹一幟。他這方面的貢獻見於一九七八年的《語言為社會符號》一書，以及與魯奎雅·哈桑合撰的《英語》。

韓教授著作等身，出版的作品有一百五十餘篇，歷任多國學府的固定教席或訪問學人。韓教授一九二五年生於英格蘭約克夏郡里茲市，對故鄉固然戀戀不忘，但一九七六年，獲悉尼大學委任為語言學創系教授之後，即定居澳洲。在此之前，他先後在劍橋、愛丁堡、伊利諾及艾塞克斯等大學任職，並獲多國大學頒贈榮譽博士學位。

韓教授一九八七年在悉尼大學榮休，但在語言學研究上則從未言休，經常應邀到世界各地講學，毫不吝嗇地與學生及同業分享他豐富的知識。他的研究工作未嘗稍懈，著作亦然，今年就與克里斯琴·馬西森合撰了一部重要著作《從意義中建構經驗：以語言為本的認知學》。他的精力和求學精神都一如既往，同時努力拓展最高層次的語言學知識。

除了敬業，韓教授也以樂群見重於時。他待人親切，談吐風趣，熱心助人，彬彬有禮，與同事合作無間，深受推崇。多個國家的青年語言學者都受到他鼓舞，以開放坦誠的胸襟，宏大兼容的視野，取代狹隘的宗派主義和偏激的民族自我中心主義。「韓禮德式」語言學研究法，認為研究只能在一個特定範疇內展開，這就是人的範疇，也即社會的範疇，捨此語言學研究即無意義。他的研究還顯示了學術道德，這就是個人勇於負責，為學以敬以誠的道德。韓教授的研究充分流露出他個人的責任感和追求語言知識的智慧。

主席先生，韓禮德教授在語言學上成就輝煌，對多個國家的教育事業貢獻良多、而且品格高尚，懇請授予榮譽文學博士學位，以茲表揚。